

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ASMARA 00736 291437Z

43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SCCT-01 OCL-00 OC-05 CCO-00 /071 W

----- 010622

P 291353Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3530

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON PRIORITY

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN PRIORITY

COMDEASTFOR PRIORITY

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA PRIORITY

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI PRIORITY

CNO WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0736

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: ASMARA SCENE: MUCH SMOKE, LITTLE FIRE

1. ALTHOUGH SEQUENCE OF MINOR INCIDENTS OCCURRED DURING PERIOD AUG 22 THROUGH AUG 28, NONE CONSTITUTE SERIOUS ESCALATION OF FRONT (ELF/PLF) ACITIVITIES. OF INTEREST, HOWEVER, IS SURPRISING RECEPTIVITY OF ASMARA RESIDENTS TO CASCADE OF RUMORS OF ROAD INTERDICTIONS.

2. REPORTEDLY, ON AUG 22 CONVOY OF EMPTY PETROLEUM TRUCKS AND REFRIGERATOR TRUCKS WHICH BRING FISH FROM MASSAWA TO ASMARA WAS ATTACKED BY INSURGENTS ON MASSAWA ROAD NEAR DONGOLLO. AFTER A BRIEF FIREFIGHT IN WHICH THERE WERE SEVERAL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, THE INSURGENTS WERE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ASMARA 00736 291437Z

DRIVEN OFF AND THE CONVOY CONTINUED UNMOLESTED TO MASSAWA.

3. EARLY TUESDAY MORNING (AUG 26) ATTACK WAS MADE IN DURFO VALLEY AREA. TARGET OF THIS ATTACK IS UNCONFIRMED, BUT MOST PREVALENT (AND CREDIBLE) REPORT STATES THAT FRONT ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO SEVER BRIDGE ON THE MASSAWA ROAD WHERE IT CROSSED DURFO VALLEY. CONGEN HAS CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE ELEVEN EPMG KIAS REPORTEDLY FROM UNIT OF COMMANDO POLICE GUARDING THE BRIDGE, AND CULVERT ON ROAD WAS DAMAGED. THOUGH FRONT FAILED TO SERIOUSLY DAMAGE BRIDGE, THEY ARE REPORTED TO HAVE CARRIED OFF LARGE PART OF EPMG UNIT'S FOOD SUPPLIES.

4. ON AUG 27 NAVCOMMUNIT PERSONNEL REPORTED (SEPTTEL) EPMG SWEEP OF UNPAVED ROAD LEADING TO KAGNEW TRACT DELTA. THOUGH THIS DAYLIGHT SWEEP DID NOT ENCOUNTER ANY INSURGENT ACTIVITY, THEY DID LOCATE AND DISARM ONE MINE ON ROAD. THIS SWEEP WAS BECOMING IMPERATIVE AS MUNICIPAL WATER PUMPING STATION (10 KM FURTHER DOWN SAME ROAD) WAS LOW ON FUEL FOR GENERATOR AND WARES WAS OFF IN MOST OF ASMARA FROM AUG 26 TO 29.

5. IN LATE EVENING OF AUG 27 FRONT UNITS REPORTEDLY HIT BELEZA POWER STATION WITH SIX ROCKETS. DAMAGE WAS NEGLIGIBLE, THOUGH ELPA HAD TO REQUEST KAGNEW POWER STATION TO ASSIST IN GENERATING POWER TO ASMARA. THIS REQUEST WAS TERMINATED AFTER 24 HOURS OF OPERATION.

6. COMMENT: THESE MINOR INCIDENTS OCCURRED AGAINST A BACKDROP OF WIDESPREAD REPORTS OF DAMAGE AND DISRUPTION TO LAND COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK IN ASMARA AREA. THESE REPORTS INCLUDE CLAIM OF DESTRUCTION OF BRIDGES AT DEBAROA ON ADI UGRI - ASMARA ROAD, AT MEREB ROVER ON TIGRE-ERITREA BORDER ON ADWA-ADI KWALA ROAD, AND RAILROAD BRIDGE BETWEEN ASMARA AND DONGOLLO. TO DATE, CONGEN HAS RECEIVED NO CONFIRMATION OF THESE REPORTS. THESE RUMORS, WHICH GAINED IMMEDIATE CURRENCY AND CREDIBILITY THROUGHOUT CITY, HAVE LARGELY PROVED TO BE UNFOUNDED. PROBABLE EXPLANATION FOR THIS ESCALATION OF RUMOR CAMPAIGN LIES IN BROADLY-HELD BELIEF THAT FRONT EXILE LEADERS' CLAIMS OF HEIGHTENED INSURGENT ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD OF EARLY SEPTEMBER DESERVE ATTENTION.

SHERRY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ASMARA 00736 291437Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, LIBERATION FRONTS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE, POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ASMARA00736
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750299-1206
From: ASMARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975083/aaaaabug.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASMARA SCENE: MUCH SMOKE, LITTLE FIRE
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET, ELF, PLF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006